UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ECA/NRD/CART/27
29 October 1986

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Sixth United Nations Regional
Cartographic Conference for Africa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,
10 - 17 November 1986

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS 6, 7, 8 AND 9 OF THE FIFTH UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

CONTRIBUTION OF THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF CARTOGRAPHY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEODESY IN AFRICA

Note of the Secretariat

LC/NAIROBI

Several eminent African geodesists were behind the establishment, in 1975, of the African Association of Cartography (AAC); they strived to ensure that it was given the status of an intergovernmental organization capable of strengthening ties of co-operation among African countries and between African countries and the international scientific community.

The Association should also provide the ideal framework to promote projects of common interest in line with the many resolutions adopted at various United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for Africa.

Moreover, the establishment of the African Association of Cartography under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is an additional instrument for co-ordination and co-operation which will help to attain the desired objectives.

Right from its initial meetings, the AAC Council demonstrated its determination to include in the priority programmes of the Association the implementation of a continentwide geodetic network and its willingness to work together with all intergovernmental, non-governmental, international and other institutions to ensure the establishment of the network.

It is only by harmoniously combining Africa's human and material resources, securing international support and cooperation and rationally using advanced technology that such a continental geodetic network can be established in the most scientific manner and within a relatively short time.

As soon as a secretariat was set up in September 1982, the Association took all appropriate measures to strenghten its co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa, the Commission for Geodesy in Africa, whose founder President, Chief Coker, was also one of the founders of AAC, the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS), the International Association of Geodesy, and all member countries and associate member countries in order to implement the first phase of the network known as the African Doppler Survey Programme (ADOS).

1. Co-operation between AAC and ECA

Such co-operation mainly concerned:

(a) Perfect co-ordination during the Fifth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa held in Cairo in March 1983 which resulted in the adoption of the crucial resolutions 7(V), 8(V) and 9(V). Contrary to what had happened in the past, these resolutions created a veritable network of activities in which co-ordinated activities both between regional organizations and African countries and between African countries and international organizations and non-African agencies could be inserted;

(b) The proclamation of 1986 as the year of Cartography in Africa and the application of Ad Hoc resolutions 476(XVIII) and CM/RES.980(XLI) respectively adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the OAU Council of Ministers. A draft standard programme of activities was jointly prepared for distribution to all African countries. In addition, a Regional Organization Committee was established to monitor and promote all continental activities particularly the Third Symposium on Geodesy in Africa held in Cote d'Ivoire in April 1986;

(c) The holding, in October 1985 in Addis Ababa, of a meeting of an African group of experts to consider the joint AAC-ECA study on the standardization of specifications for topographical maps in Africa. The specifications considered were: the ellipsoid of reference; the system of projection or planimetric plan; the metric scale;

(d) The preparation of a joint AAC-Nairobi Centre - ECA request to get some financing sources to bear the costs of concrete activities aimed at accelerating the process of setting up an integrated African geodetic network at the ASOS phase and the post-ADOS phase;

2. Co-operation between AAC and the Commission for Geodesy in Africa (CGA), AAC and the International Association of Geodesy and AAC and RCSSMRS

(a) Exemplary co-operation was established among all the above agencies to give effect to the recommendations of the fifth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa and to accelerate the finalization of the ADOS project which is the first phase of the integrated geodetic network. Such co-operation focused mainly on:

(i) The holding in February and March 1985 of two important training seminars on space geodesy in French at Yamoussoukro and in English at Nairobi;

(ii) The finalization of the programmes for the seminars;

(iii) The sensitization of all African countries through diplomatic channels and otherwise to ensure the participation of one or two national experts in the seminars. Twenty-six African countries benefitted from the training and a large majority obtained considerable material support;

(iv) The training were smoothly organized and eminent African and non-African experts delivered lectures;

(v) AAC and AIG made a joint appeal to non-member countries to accelerate their participation in the ADOS project;

(vi) AAC, CGA and IAG combined their efforts to ensure that the third Symposium on Geodesy in Africa was a success in the eyes of the host country and of African and non-African countries;

(b) AAC has constantly endeavoured to seek a harmonization of the positions of African institutions on all current and future aspects of the integrated geodetic network;

(c) Gradual co-operation has also been developed between AAC, CGA and its Gravimetric Committee to plan better co-ordination both with respect to designing and implementing the Standardized Gravimetric Network (SGN) in Africa on the basis of experience acquired by the ADOS network. AAC reiterates its willingness to work towards the rapid implementation of this important network using the study prepared by the African Gravimetric Committee. The paper which it delivered at the Symposium on Geodesy can be considered as a means of promoting co-operation with all institutions likely to contribute. Pending the finalization of the standardized gravimetric network, AAC invited all African countries to establish national geodetic and gravimetric committees in order to co-ordinate activities to this project;

(d) AAC and the Nairobi Centre have established close relations and periodically exchange information on all the questions relating to the ADOS project. However, AAC deplores the lack of co-ordination between the two institutions with respect to harmonizing their respective positions particularly as regards international issues. The sole objective of AAC is to ensure that African countries benefit as much as possible from the spinoffs of such ventures. AAC, which considers the Nairobi Centre as the centralizing agency for ADOS data, communicated the comments of Algeria to the Nairobi Centre so that computation centres could use them as in other countries.

3. Other specific activities of AAC

(a) Establishment under AAC auspices of the African Consortium for Data Processing

Following the wishes expressed by several member countries, AAC undertook appropriate consultations to establish a consortium to act as the second African Computation Centre for the ADOS project.

An agreement was very quickly reached on the principle of establishing a second centre (see resolution 3(V) of the Fifth Cartographic Conference) and the approval by AAC of that initiative at the Extraordinary meeting of its Council in Cairo on 4 March 1983.

On the basis of the above considerations AAC:

(a) secured in May 1983 the participation of the three countries signatory to the final protocol on the establishment of the African Consortium for Data Processing, namely, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia. The protocol defines how the Consortium is supposed to operate and the terms of co-operation among its member countries;

(b) secured free of charge for each member centre of the Consortium IBM and HP-1000 GEODOP(V) software. Such softwares are accompanied by all appropriate documents on their integration;

(c) Carried out all activities likely to make the Consortium operational and to promote the exchange of information to solve problems arising from the initial operation of the Consortium;

(d) Set up a very large tape Library containing all the data already integrated into the ADOS network and used in all the data processing work undertaken by the African Consortium for Data Processing.

(b) Making the Organization of African Unity (OAU) aware of the importance of the integrated geodetic network

Aware of the importance of the integrated African geodetic network and its scientific and practical implications;

Convinced that this continental venture is a decisive phase in the implementation of the recommendations of the Lagos Plan of Action and has been approved by the highest African political authorities;

Bearing in mind the difficulties encountered by several countries in participating in the project;

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Bearing in mind the difficulties encountered by several countries in participating in the project;

AAC, in pursuance of the Ad Hoc resolution adopted by the Fourth Meeting of its Council in Dakar in December 1983 submitted to the Forty-first session of the OAU Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa in February 1985 an important document highlighting Africa's backwardness in the matter and the need to obtain political support in order to accelerate the implementation of such scientific ventures through interAfrican and international co-operation.

A major resolution was adopted in that respect. It is an ideal framework which provides political support not only for the completion of ADOS but also for its post-phase continuation to continue work on the post-ADOS phases.

(c) Implementation of the post-ADOS phase

AAC has also undertaken, through the many contacts developed with its members and associate members and with IAG and CGA, the formulation of the major outlines of the post-ADOS programme aimed at consolidating achievements and initiating the implementation of selected projects as soon as African countries give their final approval to the designs.

(d) Training

Two other major activities were undertaken by AAC. The first involved informing African countries about the offer made by Geokart of Poland to train Africans which is contained in Resolution 7(V) of the Fifth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa held in Cairo in March 1983. Several African institutions have availed themselves of that offer and have even considered extending the training to modules which are crucial to the development of their institutions.

AAC reiterates its total commitment to strengthening ties of co-operation among its members and associate members aimed at promoting the development of cartography in Africa.

The second activity concerns the survey undertaken in all member countries to identify training needs and existing training institutions in Africa that cover one or several aspects of geographical sciences. The findings of the survey have been published in an Ad Hoc document. Apart from the relevant AAC resolutions, it should be recalled that the survey is partially in response to Resolution 6(V) adopted by the Fifth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for Africa.

In addition to the survey, AAC undertook all appropriate steps to bring about the establishment of an evaluation mission on training needs and on the utilization of profiles additional to those provided by the Ile Ife Centre.

4. Conclusion

Despite its very modest financial and human resources, AAC has spared no efforts to contribute to the implementation of this crucial project. It heartily thanks all those who directly or indirectly facilitated its task.

In view of its past experiences and convinced of the urgent need to pool Africa's modest material and human resources together, AAC hopes that realistic, efficient and rational solutions will be adopted aimed at greater co-ordination of all existing machineries and better harmonization of their activities in line with the collective wish of all African countries expressed in Resolution 477(XVIII) of the ECA Conference of Ministers of March 1984.